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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TASHKENT 001806

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR G/TIP (BRITTANY BROWN AND MEGAN HALL), INL (ANDREW BUHLER), AND SCA/CEN; ASTANA FOR LEGATT AND ALMATY/USAID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [EAID](#) [GG](#) [KG](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: UZBEKS PROMISE POST-ELECTION PROGRESS ON TIP ISSUES

REF: A. TASHKENT 1512  
[B.](#) TASHKENT 1520  
[C.](#) TASHKENT 1652

Classified By: Poloff Tim Buckley for reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary. On October 17 poloffs and visiting G/TIP officer met with GOU officials from MFA, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), and the Office of the State Prosecutor to discuss TIP issues. MFA said the GOU was surprised and upset by the recent Tier 3 rating, which it considered "politically motivated". GOU noted that the Parliament is preoccupied by the upcoming presidential elections, and that adoption of the draft anti-TIP legislation is not likely until early next year. However, the GOU says the final legislation will include stronger penalties for traffickers than the original draft, and "other accomplishments" will be made prior to the next edition of the TIP report. GOU noted increased awareness resulting from successful INL and USAID-funded programs, and asked for new INL-funded training programs to bring law enforcement officials, including prosecutors, to the United States to enhance anti-TIP capability. GOU also noted its efforts to coordinate anti-TIP among government agencies and to conduct a conference before the end of the year. MFA promised to look into NGO registration issues, and described new MVD-assisted public awareness segments to be aired on national television. MVD also specifically inquired about anti-TIP efforts of FBI and ICE. GOU appears willing to engage on the TIP issue despite bitterness over the Tier 3 rating, and an improved rating on next year's report is attainable if promised steps are taken. End summary.

BITTERNESS ABOUT TIER 3

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[¶](#)2. (C) MFA Americas Chief Ismat Fayzullaev said that TIP is a global problem, and added "with great regret, I must announce that the US is the biggest global trafficking destination and we hope the USG will take greater steps" to combat TIP. He noted the GOU was "very surprised" by the Tier 3 designation this year and considered this "a politically motivated decision" since the TIP situation is "almost the same, or even worse, in other CIS countries." He stated other countries were rated higher than Uzbekistan despite "the

enormous efforts of the GOU on this issue". The GOU is particularly upset that Georgia is Tier 1 even though "many Uzbek victims are using Georgian passports and passing through Tbilisi". Fayzullaev also cited Kyrgyzstan's better rating despite being a major source for false passports and a departure point for overseas-bound Uzbek victims. He added that the USG "does not take this into account" in compiling the report. (Note: Earlier in the day, poloff and G/TIP visitor heard the same information from the anti-TIP NGO "Istiqbolli Avlod" and interviewed an Uzbek victim who was indeed trafficked through Tbilisi, where she received Georgian documents en route to the United Arab Emirates. The same NGO also previously informed poloff that the Kyrgyz city of Osh is a major embarkation point for Uzbek victims. See reftel C. End note).

#### ADOPTION OF DRAFT LEGISLATION LIKELY DELAYED...

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¶3. (C) Fayzullaev conceded that passage of the draft anti-TIP legislation, which was expected in October (see refetls A and B), will now likely be delayed until early next year due to the upcoming presidential elections. The parties are preoccupied with selecting their candidates and preparing for the elections, and Fayzullaev noted that "we, like you, are waiting".

#### BUT THE NEW LAW WILL BE TOUGHER THAN EXPECTED

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¶4. (C) Mr. Jurnaev of the Office of the State Prosecutor said "we cannot deny that this problem exists", but said it is a relatively new one for Uzbekistan. He emphasized that the

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draft law submitted to Parliament is stronger than the version previously provided to the Embassy, particularly regarding stiffer penalties for traffickers. He agreed with G/TIP officer that trafficking offenders have not spent enough time in jail, which he attributed (with surprising frankness) to weaknesses in a 2001 "liberalization of the criminal justice system." Jurnaev is confident that this will change with adoption of the new, tougher law and that more traffickers will go to prison, although he believes most traffickers are operating from outside Uzbekistan to recruit Uzbek victims.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

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¶5. (C) In response to G/TIP officer's remarks that law enforcement aspects are particularly important in assessing the country's annual rating, Jurnaev noted that several TIP cases are presently under investigation. He also said the Office of the State Prosecutor, which oversees all law enforcement agencies, is "strictly supervising" TIP issues. He described an action plan for the second half of this year to coordinate anti-TIP efforts of all agencies, and an internal conference will be held during October. Fayzullaev added that MFA already passed statistics from the first half of the year to the Embassy and promised to provide updated yearly figures shortly after the new year.

#### PROTECTION OF VICTIMS

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¶6. (C) Fayzullaev reported that the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has registered several NGOs this year that will soon be starting shelters for victims in Ferghana, Samarcand, and Surkhandarya Provinces. The MOJ has reportedly ordered other agencies to provide assistance to local NGOs in support of anti-TIP efforts. Poloff asked about registration difficulties of an NGO in Nukus, which limits its effectiveness, and MFA said they were unaware of this issue and "believe this is not accurate information." Nodira Karimova of the NGO Istiqbolli Avlod told poloff on numerous

occasions (see reftel C), including earlier the same day, that their Nukus partner NGO does great work but cannot register "perhaps due to the lack of good connections" with the government. MFA representatives offered to work with the Embassy to follow up, and poloff explained that successful intervention would be seen as a positive, proactive step by the GOU. MFA cited the presence of Istiqbolli Avlod partner NGOs in many cities of Uzbekistan and stated "it's not the registration that matters but the quality of the work." MFA representatives were also unaware that IOM has actually tried to register in Uzbekistan and seemed unsure whether it is an NGO or an international organization.

REQUEST FOR USG TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE

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¶17. (C) Fayzullaev specifically requested the Embassy to establish new INL training programs to enable law enforcement officials, including prosecutors, to visit the United States in order to enhance the GOU's anti-TIP capabilities. He noted, as have our anti-TIP contacts, that the level of awareness about the problem has definitely increased recently as a result of previous INL and USAID-funded programs. Fayzullaev also said "especially this year, you can see much more literature and coverage in mass media on the topic, which was not the case before." G/TIP officer noted that it would be helpful if the GOU partially funded any additional training programs to demonstrate its commitment. MVD representative Mr. Kuldashev asked about what his counterparts in the FBI and ICE do to combat human trafficking and was interested in whether there is any data about the extent to which international organized smuggling groups engage in human trafficking. Mr. Juraev noted the US has two centuries more experience in institution-building and said the Office of the State Prosecutor is interested in "models and best practices" that could enhance anti-TIP

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efforts.

OTHER PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS

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¶18. (C) Karimova informed Poloff and G/TIP officer earlier in the day that MVD is involved in producing new public awareness videos and had already filmed a segment at the Tashkent TIP shelter. Kuldashev confirmed MVD involvement in the project, and Fayzullaev added "it's not Hollywood, but materials are being produced with the cooperation and advice of MVD." These video materials, which are intended for broadcast on national television, are a significant new GOU effort which post will continue to monitor. The GOU reps were also pleased to receive copies of the film "Human Trafficking" (with the understanding that authorization has not yet been obtained to broadcast it), following a successful recent screening at the Embassy which was attended by MFA representatives. Fayzullaev also noted that the GOU, together with Karimova's IOM-funded NGO, is conducting TIP-themed conferences around the country for local officials from the National Security Service (NSS), Office of the State Prosecutor, and MVD.

COMMENT

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¶19. (C) Although Fayzullaev says the GOU will step up its anti-trafficking efforts "out of concern for our citizens and not as a result of pressure from the United States", the GOU is clearly bothered by the Tier 3 classification on this year's TIP Report. The delay in the passage of the anti-TIP legislation is disappointing but not surprising given the GOU's preoccupation with the December 23 elections. If the final version indeed contains stiffer penalties for traffickers than originally expected and it is adopted early next year, this would represent a major step forward. The representatives from these three key GOU agencies seemed

genuinely interested in further engagement with the United States on the anti-TIP issue, which is consistent with the recent positive steps noted by our main NGO contacts. Fayzullaev provided assurances that there will be "major accomplishments" before the March 31, 2008 deadline for data collection for the next TIP Report, and an improved rating is attainable if the GOU follows through. Despite the rancor about this year's report, the TIP issue has the potential to be a bright spot in 2008.

NORLAND